

**DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**  
**Administrative Memorandums**

**200.18**      **TITLE:**      Internet, E-mail, and General Computer Use Policy  
**ISSUING OFFICE:**      Director's Office  
**DISTRIBUTION THROUGH:**      All DFA Employees      (LEVEL)  
**DATE ISSUED/REVISED:**      10/3/00      **REPLACES:**      \_\_\_\_\_      **DATED:**      \_\_\_\_\_

**A. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

This policy covers the management of all electronic mail and Internet systems provided by the Department of Finance and Administration. The Department of Finance and Administration encourages the use of the Internet (including electronic mail) as an integral part of its overall processes. Use of the Internet is encouraged to:

- Provide an efficient method to exchange information within state agencies, between governmental agencies, and to the public;
- Provide sources of data to assist state employees in accomplishing their tasks;
- Accomplish the business of government

**B. ACCEPTABLE / UNACCEPTABLE USE**

The computer system and network are intended for the business use of the employee. Inappropriate or unacceptable use by an employee is the basis for disciplinary action. It is unacceptable for a user to use, submit, publish, display, or transmit on the network or on any computer system any information which:

- Violates or infringes on the rights of any other person, including the right to privacy;
- Contains defamatory, false, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, pornographic, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive, or otherwise biased, discriminatory, or illegal material;
- Restricts or inhibits other users from using the system(s). Or, use that degrades the efficiency of the computer system(s) such as unofficial: memberships in chat rooms; channel subscriptions; or receipt of streaming or broadcast audio or video. See Appendix A for definitions.
- Uses the system for any illegal purpose, or for personal gain.

Only authorized software may be installed on state-owned or leased hardware. In order to guarantee compliance with copyright laws, and insure compatibility with office computer environments and "standard" software loads, the installation of any personally owned or downloaded software/shareware must be pre-approved by a System Administrator.

**C. ELECTRONIC MAIL [E-MAIL] and FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT [FOI]**

E-mail is considered network activity; thus, it is subject to all policies regarding acceptable/unacceptable use of state owned or leased computer systems and networks. The user should not consider e-mail to be either private or secure.

Specifically forbidden in the use of E-Mail is:

- Any activity covered by inappropriate use statements included in this policy.
- Sending / forwarding chain letters, virus hoaxes, urban legends, etc.

Because electronic messages are typically stored in one place and then forwarded to one or more locations, often without the specific knowledge of the originator, they are vulnerable to interception or unintended use. DFA will attempt to provide an electronic messaging environment that provides data confidentiality and integrity. However, DFA cannot be responsible for web-based e-mail systems such as Yahoo, Juno, etc. State employees should always be aware of the risks associated with the use of all e-mail systems.

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### The Arkansas Freedom of Information Act

The electronic files, including e-mail files, of state employees are potentially subject to public inspection and copying under the state [Freedom of Information Act \("FOI"\)](#), Ark. Code Ann. § 25-19-101 et seq.

The FOI defines "public records" to include "data compilations in any form, required by law to be kept or otherwise kept, . . . which constitute a record of the performance or lack of performance of official functions which are or should be carried out by a public official or employee [or] a governmental agency. . . ." Ark. Code Ann. § 25-19-103(1). All records maintained in public offices or by public employees within the scope of their employment are presumed to be public records. Various exceptions apply. See Ark. Code Ann. § 25-19-105, including Ark. Code 26-18-303 which removes state tax records from FOI, Ark. Code 27-50-907 which prohibits release of any personal information concerning a driver, Ark Code 9-14-210 which prohibits releasing child support information and the Federal Driver Privacy Protection Act.

### Records Retention Policies

All relevant records retention policies and statutes must be followed, and it is the responsibility of each State Employee to understand which of these pertain to his or her work.

### Maintaining E-Mail

DFA maintains e-mail backups with history up to six months. The responsibility lies with the user for e-mail retention beyond six months. E-mail messages of only transitory value should not be saved. In fact, the failure to routinely delete these messages clogs information systems and strains storage resources.

If a user chooses to retain e-mail, that user must understand that all retained files and electronic messages may be accessible under FOI law. In order to properly maintain e-mail using Outlook/Exchange, users must transfer any information they wish to retain to "Personal Folders" on their local hard drive. Users should then empty all messages from their Inbox, Sent Mail folder, and Deleted Items folder. Users should also empty their "Recycle Bins" on a regular basis.

### Guidelines for effective and efficient use of E-Mail

#### Mail Recipients

- Prioritize your messages. Don't automatically respond to e-mails in the order you receive them. Handle urgent and easy to answer ones first.
- You don't need to answer everything. Look at the subject line and sender. If you don't know the sender or the subject line doesn't apply to you opening the e-mail may just generate more unwanted e-mail.
- Respond promptly to essential e-mail. If you can't answer a business question quickly let the sender know you received the e-mail and set a timeframe for response.
- Learn your e-mail program and its capabilities.

#### Mail Senders

- Always write a definitive subject line. This helps your receiver prioritize their mail.
- Tailor the text for easy understanding and response.
- Don't use e-mail for debate
- Minimize attachments.

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- Keep paragraphs short and to the point.
- Focus on one subject per message.
- Use your signature at the bottom of messages when communicating with people who may not know you personally
- Capitalize words only to highlight an important point. Capitalizing whole words that are not titles is considered as SHOUTING!
- Asterisks surrounding a word can be used to make a stronger point.
- Because of the international nature of the Internet, use a date convention spelling out the month and using the full year.
- Follow chain of command procedures when corresponding with superiors. Don't send a complaint to the "top" just because you can.

#### **All Users**

- Delete unwanted messages immediately
- Keep messages remaining in your mailbox to a minimum
- Never assume your e-mail can't be read by others

#### **D. PRIVACY OF ELECTRONIC RECORDS**

A system administrator is any person designated by the Department Director to maintain, manage, and provide security for shared multi-user computing resources, including computers, networks, and servers.

System Administrators shall perform their duties fairly, in cooperation with the user community and DFA administrators. They shall adhere to this code and all other pertinent rules and regulations, shall respect the privacy of users to the greatest extent possible, and shall refer disciplinary matters to appropriate DFA staff.

Given the nature of the technology, a wide range of information can be easily collected by DFA personnel using system software. For example, software may be configured to provide aggregate information on the number of users logged in, the number of users accessing certain software, etc.

No information shall be routinely collected that is not required by system administrators in the direct performance of their duties, such as routine backup for system recovery. Unauthorized access to any information will result in immediate disciplinary action.

#### **E. REGULATION / ENFORCEMENT:**

In order for anyone to gain access to a state employee's e-mail, Internet cache or files without that employee's permission for any reason, the Director of the Department of Finance and Administration (or designee) must submit a signed statement authorizing such access to the appropriate System Administrator.

Violation of this policy will result in appropriate disciplinary action to the employee per Administrative Memorandum 300.12. The disciplinary action could result in immediate dismissal.

All federal and state laws, as well as general DFA regulations and policies, are applicable to the use of computing resources. These include, but are not limited to, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986, 18 U.S.C. § 2510 et seq.; the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act, Ark. Code Ann. § 25-19-101 et seq.; and state and federal computer fraud statutes, 18 U.S.C. § 1030 and Ark. Code. Ann. § 5-41-101 et seq. Illegal reproduction of software and other intellectual property protected by U.S. copyright laws and by licensing agreements may result in civil and criminal sanctions.

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**APPENDIX A**

**Definitions**

**Channel Subscriptions**

- Subscribed to services, which provide a continuous flow of updated information such as stock market activity or general world news to a client's desktop computer. Channel Subscriptions are usually activated at the time the desktop system is turned on, at the start of a workday, and may remain active throughout the workday.

**Chat Rooms**

- On Line interactive communications, by keyboard, between two or more people using their desktop computers to carry on conversations through the Internet, an on line service, or a Bulletin Board. This is the desktop computer version of a telephone conversation between two people, or, a conference call involving groups of people.

**Streaming Audio/Video**

- Audio or video transmission over a data network. The transmissions are received as a continuous stream of audio, such as music files; or video, such as movies, from a provider to the client's desktop computer. The desktop computer is effectively being used in a fashion similar to a radio or television.

**Urban Legends**

- Similar to virus hoaxes. Popular narratives alleged to be true, transmitted from person to person by oral, written, or electronic communication (including fax and email). These stories always involve some combination of outlandish, humiliating, humorous, terrifying, or supernatural events – events that always happened to someone else. For credibility, the teller of an urban legend relies on citing of an "authoritative" word-of-mouth source (typically "a friend of a friend") rather than verifiable facts. And sometimes, but not always, there's a moral to the story, e.g.: "behave yourself, or bad things will happen".

**APPENDIX B**

**Additional Information**

Netiquette - Generally accepted standards of conduct, or etiquette, for use of the Internet.

**Netiquette Web Site Links**

<http://www.fau.edu/netiquette/net/index.html>  
<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>  
<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/introduction.html>  
<http://redtail.unm.edu/cp/netiquette.html>  
<http://www.ro.com/members/info/netiquette.html>